

THE PROBLEM
OF
HUMAN DESTINY



AS CONDITIONED
BY
FREE WILL



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Abbott, Lyman, 1835-1922.

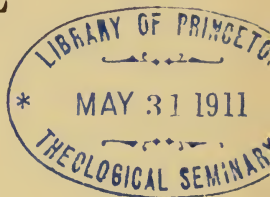
The problem of human destiny
as conditioned by free will

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THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN DESTINY

AS CONDITIONED BY

FREE WILL



DISCUSSION BY

REV. LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D.

Editor of *The Outlook*

REV. ERIC WATERHOUSE, A.M., B.D.

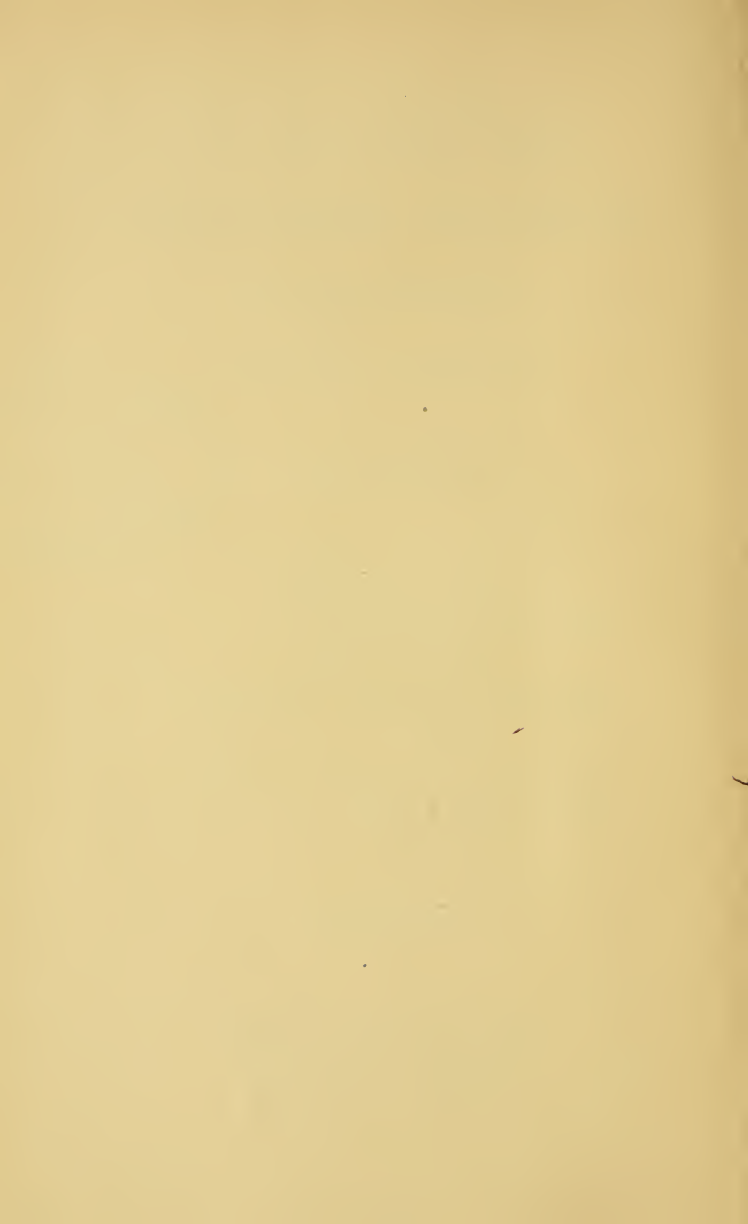
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PROF. WILLIAM G. TOUSEY, S.T.D.

Tufts College


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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

DURING the session of the Universalist General Convention held in Boston, 1899, an evening was set apart as *Interdenominational Evening*. The attendance at this congress of the churches was large, and profound interest was manifest. His Excellency, Governor Wolcott, gave an address of welcome; Dr. Francis G. Peabody of Harvard University spoke for the Unitarians, and Dr. Frank O. Hall of New York, for the Universalists. Dr. Lyman Abbott, editor of *The Outlook*, representing the Congregationalists, gave a notable address entitled, "*Why I am not a Universalist.*" This address was printed in full in *The Outlook*, and later in *The Universalist Leader*, and immediately called forth a review by Prof. W. G. Tousey of Tufts College, under the caption, "*An Open Letter to Dr. Lyman Abbott.*" The Open Letter, after its appearance in the *Leader*, was printed in part in *The Outlook*, and briefly replied to

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by Dr. Abbott. This rejoinder evoked some final comments from Professor Tousey.

Later, in the *Homiletic Review*, of April, 1910, Rev. Eric Waterhouse of London, under the heading, "*Can God be Baffled? A Criticism of the Logic of Universalism*," raised anew the issue so strikingly developed by Dr. Abbott. His approach, however, was at a somewhat different angle, and, as will be seen, in somewhat different temper. By invitation of the editors of the *Review*, Professor Tousey replied in the same number.

On both occasions the main contention was over the bearing of Free Will upon the Problem of Human Destiny. It would seem that to-day for many thoughtful minds the sole obstacle to the acceptance of the Universalist belief in the final perfection and happiness of man is found in his freedom of will. Being free his final destiny is, it is held, necessarily uncertain, and unpredictable. "A man's destiny is in his own hands; what he may do with it we cannot know." Notwithstanding the fervent desire and indisputable purpose of the Almighty, he may, by virtue of

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his inalienable liberty of choice, elect to follow the evil way forever.

With a view to promoting clearer thinking on this subject, and a better understanding of the momentous issue, the Universalist Publishing House, with due acknowledgment of the courteous concessions of *The Outlook* and *The Homiletic Review*, now brings together these notable discourses in the order of their appearance.

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WHY I AM NOT A UNIVERSALIST

By LYMAN ABBOTT

IT would be pleasant to-night simply to speak of those great fundamental truths in which all Congregationalists, whether they call themselves Unitarian, Universalist, or Orthodox, are agreed. But it has seemed to me that it would be of more service, both to the denomination which I represent and to that to which I am speaking, if I should tell you, as far as I can in a short address, why Liberal Congregationalists are not Universalists. It is true that no Congregationalist has a right to speak with authority for other Congregationalists. Yet I think it very clear that modern Congregationalism does not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment as it was preached by Jonathan Edwards, or even by Charles G. Finney. It may still be entertained as a scholastic theory by a few minds. It

may be occasionally preached in isolated pulpits. But it is not found to any extent in the ministry of even the more conservative pulpits of to-day, and certainly not in the pulpits of Liberal Congregationalists. Personally I absolutely disown it. I do not believe that any one of God's creatures will be kept by God in eternal existence simply that he may go on in sin and misery forever. The proposition has long since become spiritually unthinkable to me. I might perhaps believe that a soul could suffer eternally; but I cannot believe that any being that God ever made will be kept in existence by God that he may go on in sin eternally.

What was the old doctrine of eternal punishment? The Savoy Confession, up to the middle of this century, was the recognized expression of Orthodox Congregationalism. Not that it was binding on Orthodox Congregationalists; but it was the only historic creed they possessed. Except in the matter of polity, and one or two minor matters, it was identical with the Westminster Confession of Faith; and this was the substance of its statement: It declared that our first parents fell by

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eating the forbidden fruit; that, they being the root of all mankind, their guilt was imputed and their sinful and corrupted nature was conveyed to all their posterity; that as a result we are "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good;" that from the race thus lost and ruined in the Fall, "by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others are fore-ordained to everlasting death;" that those not effectually called, God was pleased, "for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice;" and that those "not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved."

Specifically, and clause by clause, I disown that statement. I do not accept it "for substance of doctrine." I do not believe that we are "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good." I do not believe that

some men are fore-ordained to everlasting death. I do not believe that it has pleased God to pass any by and ordain them to dishonor and wrath. Least of all do I believe that men, strive however much they may, cannot be saved unless they have something more than the call of the ministry of the Word and "the common operations of God's spirit."

This doctrine is inconsistent with the character of a righteous God. I might fear such a God; I might tremble before such a God; I might, because I was a coward, obey such a God; but I could not reverence such a God. It is inconsistent with the faith that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh; for it was not his nature to pass any by or to ordain any to dishonor and wrath. It is inconsistent with the Scripture; inconsistent with the parable of the prodigal son, which is Christ's epitome of the Gospel; inconsistent with the declaration of Paul that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" inconsistent with the very chapters of Romans on which it is supposed to be founded; for

they close with the declaration that "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all;" inconsistent with the splendid picture John paints, of the time when every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, shall give praise and glory to the God of their salvation. This doctrine of the particular choice of some to glory and virtue, and the predetermined choice of others to wrath and dishonor, I disown as unphilosophical, antagonistic to the instincts of justice in humanity, paralyzing to Christian activity, dishonoring to God, unethical, unscriptural, irreverent, and untrue.

And yet I am not a Universalist. I am going to tell you why not.

We may approach life from either one of two points of view. We may approach it by the study of phenomena from without, or by the interrogation of consciousness from within. If we approach it by a study of the phenomena without, we come to the inevitable conclusion that not only physical nature, but human nature, is under great divine laws, and under a great divine Lawgiver. If there were not such

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laws, if life were a mere aggregation of individual wills, no science of human life would be possible. There could be neither history nor philosophy nor sociology nor ethics, because the science of life is not the mere reporting of phenomena, nor the mere classification of phenomena in their respective pigeon-holes; it is the recognition of the laws under which the phenomena take place. The existence of sociology, or the law of society; of ethics, or the law of the moral life; of commercial law, or the law of the shop — the very existence of these laws is itself demonstration that the world of men, like the world of nature, is under law and a Lawgiver. But we may also interrogate life from within; and if we do, the first and fundamental fact we confront is the fact of our own freedom. Freedom with limitations, freedom in a certain domain, freedom within narrow boundaries; but, within those boundaries, absolute freedom. It is in vain for Jonathan Edwards to tell us that man is like a pair of scales and always inclines to the heaviest motive, otherwise he would incline to the lightest motive, which is a contradiction in

terms. We come back to Samuel Johnson's utterance, "All argument is against the freedom of the will; we know we are free, and that's the end on't."

The men who take their point of view from the outward world, studying law from phenomena, become in theology Calvinists; the men who take their point of view from consciousness, studying it from within, become Arminians. I adopt, and I think most Liberal Congregationalists adopt, the second method. We believe that the ultimate fact in human life is the freedom of the individual will. We start from what we know, and reach out from that toward the unknown. I know that I can choose the good, and therefore I can choose the evil. What I find true in myself I believe to be true in every other man; he can choose the good, and therefore he can choose the evil. And while I wistfully desire — yea, and sometimes devoutly hope — that when the great drama of life here and hereafter is ended, all God's creatures will have chosen the good — I do not know. If I were a Calvinist, I should be a Universalist. If I believed that God could make all men righteous,

I should be sure that he would make all men righteous; otherwise he would not be a righteous God. But I start from the other pole. I begin with my own absolute freedom. I recognize as a fact, in my life, in my philosophy, and in my preaching, that, in the last analysis, the destiny of every man is in his own hands. Father may persuade, mother may entice, influences may environ, God himself may surround with all possible persuasions, but in the last analysis the destiny of every man is in his own hands. And what he will do with it I do not know.

Why, if God be good, has he made a world in which there is sin? Why has he not made a world sinless? Could he not? Certainly; he not only could, he has. The birds are sinless. But he could not make a world in which are free moral agents able to choose the good without giving them at the same time power to choose the evil. Power to choose the one is power to choose the other; and a world where there are some men who choose shame, dishonor, sin, and death, is a better world, I dare to say, than a world made of machines that could choose neither the good nor

the evil. I dare believe that a universe in which there were both a heaven and a hell would be a better universe than one in which there was neither, because a universe of beings unable to choose heaven rather than hell.

Do I, then, deny the omnipotence of God? It depends upon what we mean by omnipotence. If by omnipotence we mean that God can do everything by a simple act of the will, I do deny it. If God can do everything by a simple edict of the will, there is no room left for wisdom; for wisdom consists in using means to an end. I do not believe that God can compel a free moral agent to be virtuous, because he would then cease to be a free moral agent and would cease to be virtuous. Omnipotence cannot make men virtuous against their will, because virtue consists in the free choice of righteousness by a will which is not coerced. By omnipotence in the moral realm I mean that God can do all things in that realm consistent with preserving the freedom of the moral agent whom he is making in his own image — so making him that he may be righteous as God is righteous, by choosing the right and eschewing

the evil under no compulsion. If it were possible for God to hypnotize the race, so that under his hypnotic influence every man should choose the crown of glory, I would not have him do it, for then all the virtue would be in the hypnotizer and not in the hypnotized; and the glory of humanity is this, that when at last man is completed, he will stand in his moral nature independent, holding the helm of his own destiny and directing his own course.

Sometimes you see a child sitting on the seat by his father driving the span. His father holds the reins in front of the child; the boy thinks he is guiding the horses, but he is not. So some men believe in the freedom of the will. Sometimes you will see that same father allowing the boy to hold the reins, but sitting by his side, ready to snatch them the moment any peril comes. So other men believe in the freedom of the will. The most awful and the most splendid fact in human life to me is this — that God puts the reins of my destiny into my own hands, and neither holds the reins before me nor behind me. So, preaching the illimitable love and the infinite grace of God our Saviour unto

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men, repudiating all particularism in theology, repudiating the notion that the grace of God ends for any man at death, believing with all my heart that all the resources of God's love and life and power are pledged to the restoration of all men to righteousness, holiness, and happiness—still my last message to the men and women to whom I speak is this: I set before you life and death; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

You will understand that I am not trying to persuade you to my faith. Not even an editor, not even an American editor, not even a New York City editor, would have the effrontery to come into a denominational congress and argue that its creed was erroneous. I am only trying to point out the difference, as it seems to me, between your faith, if I understand it aright, and my faith. I enter into no cheap slander of a sister church, neither here, nor, as God is my witness, anywhere else. I do not argue against the assertion, sometimes found in circulation in unthinking circles, that God is too merciful to punish sin; for I do not understand this to be Universalist doctrine.

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Whatever the Universalism of the past may have been, I have never found in any evangelical literature a more terrible indictment of sin, or a more awful portrayal of its inevitable consequences, than in some Universalist literature. The question is not, Will a merciful God save all men from suffering? it is, Can he save all men from sin? For salvation is character; redemption is righteousness; and nothing could be more appalling to the spiritually-minded soul than the contemplation of a world in which men were allowed to go on in selfishness and sin forever, and yet in blissful indifference and unconcern.

It is possible that some of you will say, Why, this is just our belief! Why are you not a Universalist? Then I will answer by another question: If this is your belief, why are you not Congregationalists? We are nearer together, perhaps, than we have thought. I thank your chairman for the compliment he has given to the Orthodox Congregationalists in conceding to them progress in theology, but I cannot in modesty take all that compliment to my own church; I think the Universalists have made some progress in the-

ology also. I will not recall the history of the past, but I will say this: all that the Orthodoxy of the past has said respecting the greatness of the awful sanctity of God's law, I believe the Universalism of to-day says; and all that the Universalism of the past has said about the illimitable love of God, the Father of all the living, I believe the Liberal Congregationalism of to-day says. Certainly of this I am sure — the action of more than one recent Congregational Council bears witness to the fact — that the battle for liberty has been fought and won in the denomination which I am unofficially representing here to-night. Congregationalists would not ordain to the ministry any man who disbelieved in the solemn sanction and the inviolability of God's law; nor any man who thought that there was any other escape from penalty than repentance from sin and loyal acceptance of God's law manifested by obedience in daily life. But any man who believes that the law of God is inviolable; that punishment follows its infraction; that remedy follows repentance and never follows nor can follow without repentance; and that this rem-

edy is revealed in and through Jesus Christ, will receive ordination, though he believe, as some Congregationalists do, that some men will never repent, and will live in sin and misery forever; or, as some other Congregationalists do, that some men will never repent, and will therefore cease to exist; or, as still other Congregationalists do, that, under the persuasions of Almighty God, all men will at last repent, and through the door of repentance be brought back to holiness and happiness and God; or, as I think the majority of Congregationalists do to-day, decline to be dogmatic on that question altogether. The Congregational Church, thank God, is large enough for them all!

From Congregationalists who are not and cannot be dogmatic concerning the future, I bring greetings to you, fellow Christians and fellow Congregationalists, who think you know what we can only hope. In a common faith in God the Universal Father; in a common faith in Jesus Christ his Son, manifesting the life of God to the vision of men; in a common faith in a full and free salvation offered to all men here on earth; in a common faith, which in the

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past has been denied, in One whose mercy endureth forever, we can join hands in working in faith and hope and love for the present salvation of men from sin through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. — *Reprinted from "The Outlook" of Nov. 11, 1899.*

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AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. LYMAN ABBOTT

DEAR SIR: — No one can read your address, "*Why I Am Not a Universalist*," printed in the last number of *The Universalist Leader*, without feeling the charm of its courtesy; or without admiring its felicitous phrase, its clear presentations, and its persuasive reasoning. And there is no Universalist, I am sure, who will not be grateful to you for your indignant refusal to have part in the current "cheap slander of a sister church;" or, who will not feel complimented by your unflinching frankness, and experience profound satisfaction at finding so eminent a thinker in such comforting proximity to the position it has been ours so long to defend against stupendous odds. Finding ourselves in such pleasant accord on so many points, we might be tempted to slur the remaining differences but for the knowledge that Dr. Abbott would be the last to condone a course like that.

I agree with you that the prime con-

dition of further *rapprochement* is a clear and unshrinking recognition of our real differences; and you will agree with me that, for a proper appreciation of these differences, it is essential that they should be looked at from both sides. It is from a sincere wish to provide for this, and in no controversial spirit, that I address to you this open letter. Your statement is so orderly, and you have so skilfully directed attention to the essentials of the issue, that I feel that I can do no better than to follow your lead, with running comment on such points as call for attention.

You remind us very justly that, "We may approach life from either of two points of view. We may approach it by the study of phenomena from without, or by the interrogation of consciousness from within. If we approach it by a study of phenomena from without, we come by the inevitable conclusion that not only physical nature, but human nature, is under great divine laws, and under a great divine Law-giver." But studying life from within, "The first and fundamental fact we confront is the fact of our own

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freedom, — freedom with limitations, freedom in a certain domain, freedom within narrow boundaries; but, within those boundaries, absolute freedom.” With equal justice you go on to say: “The men who take their point of view from the outward world, studying law from phenomena, become in theology Calvinists [necessitarians]; the men who take their point of view from consciousness, studying it from within, become Arminians [libertarians]. I adopt, and I think most Liberal Congregationalists adopt, the second method.” I am impelled to ask, Would it not be more scientific to study the problem from *both points of view*? And should it surprise any student of the history of philosophic thought to find that there is a great truth at the center of Calvinism, and a great truth in Arminianism? Believing that this universe is essentially rational, that one part is ultimately consistent with all other parts, and that nothing, therefore, can be studied in isolation, may I not address myself without misgiving to the overwhelming evidence of sovereignty on the one hand, and to the indubitable consciousness of freedom on the other?

And doing this, may I not find myself landed, not in Liberal Congregationalism, not in agnosticism as regards human destiny, but in the inspiring faith that, in the end, every knee shall bow to the supremacy of righteousness, and every tongue confess the beauty of holiness? I cannot admit that we are shut up to the alternative which you present — absolute predestination on the one hand, and unconditional liberty on the other. The disjunction is “imperfect.” We may, I submit, adopt the conception of a determinism in the world consistent with real freedom — a determinism as respects the final destiny of men and the ultimate ends of creation; and a freedom which, though restricted, and suitably safeguarded against irretrievable disaster, is, nevertheless, genuine — a freedom large as the psychologists will permit us to claim, but entirely adequate for the explanation of human responsibility, and for the requirements of ethical science.

“If I were a Calvinist, I should be a Universalist. If I believed that God could make all men righteous, I should be sure that he would make all men righteous; otherwise he would not be

a righteous God." Unquestionably. But the implication that, *Not being a Calvinist you are not permitted to be a Universalist*, appears to me to be singularly unwarranted; and yet, it is upon this implication that the whole weight of your agnosticism is made to rest. Every Universalist rejects Calvinistic necessitarianism as emphatically as you do; but I fail to see that this rejection requires him to hold the will to be *lawless* and human destiny to be *indeterminable*. Necessitated action is indeed uniform and predictable; but we are by no means permitted to convert this, as you seem to have done, and hold that uniform and predictable action must be necessitated. Free will undoubtedly precludes necessitation of conduct in detail, but *not certainty as to the sequel*. The disposition to assume this is, we may suspect, our pernicious inheritance from once prevalent but utterly indefensible conceptions of freedom. Believing in the "Liberty of Indifference," believing that the will is an independent and mysterious something, capable of blind initiative, but intrinsically capricious, indifferent to motive, and absolved from all relation to the

intellect and the appetencies, it were easy to suppose that human destiny must forever be indeterminate and unpredictable. I cannot here escape the impression that a conception of freedom, which I supposed had long been shelved as a philosophical curiosity, has somehow got abroad, and been unwittingly admitted as the hidden premise of your conclusion. I find the psychology and the ethical philosophy of the day, alike, insisting that we shall regard the will, not as a dislocated, inherently erratic thing, but as the expression, or function, of a highly complex personality, in which the feelings, the intelligence, and the moral judgment are always operative — a personality subject by nature to new reactions under changing environments, susceptible to new impressions, accessible to new lights, and forever haunted by ideals, which, with tireless persuasiveness, lead the way through revolutions of disturbance to an orderly and consistent life.

The further implication of your remark, that, in the absence of positive necessitation, there can be no determinism in the affairs of men — that the will, being superior to *compulsion*, is

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not amenable to *control*, — seems to me equally inadmissible. Is there any one who doubts that the forces of education and moral suasion may result in the determination of a man's life, as real, as enduring, as any that can be achieved by the exertion of the most despotic power? Such moral control may indeed be more elastic, and less immediate in its effects, than physical control; but, in the case of beings endowed with reason and sensibility, it may prove no less positive — no less certain as regards ultimate results. Without interfering with the free play of any hand, without predestinating the results of a single throw, it is possible for God to so weight wrong action with adverse conditions and painful consequence that the game infallibly will be his. It may be that every wandering son of God is *doomed* to reappear at his father's gate — though his return may prove late and be as pitiful as the return of the Prodigal. The "last analysis" undoubtedly "shows that a man's destiny is in his own hands"; but does it not also show that the hands in which that destiny is placed are the hands of a being not wholly whimsical,

but essentially rational and teachable? By virtue of his free agency a man may, it is true, plunge from the moral orbit and speed away into darkness and unexplored distance; but, in "the last analysis," we shall find that he is so constituted that he cannot be indifferent to his experience—he cannot be unmindful of the receding light, the growing chill, the swiftly gathering perils and menacing portents; and, above all, he cannot escape a gravitation which, searching his elemental life, lays a relentless grip upon his conscience and his reason. It is by warrant of such disclosures of the "last analysis" that we venture to predict the free reflexion of the wild career and infallible return to sanity and moral equilibrium.

To me there is profound pathos in your remark: "While I may wistfully desire — yea, and sometimes devoutly hope, that when the great drama of life here and hereafter is ended, all God's creatures will have chosen the good — *I do not know.*" Nevertheless, it suggests to me something very like a *reductio ad absurdum*. If the human will is so inherently erratic that we cannot know what *any* man will do with

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his destiny, we cannot know but that *every* soul will finally choose the evil; we cannot know but that the kingdom of God will be totally subverted; we cannot know but that heaven will at last be *willingly* vacated by every tenant, and hell peopled of *free choice* by the whole race of Adam; indeed, I cannot see — and this will greatly trouble us all — I cannot see that Dr. Abbott himself, dowered as he is with this fatal gift of freedom, can ever know what Dr. Abbott will do with Dr. Abbott's destiny! If, in truth, *liberty* is ultimately so indistinguishable from *license*, who can say that the high-minded editor of *The Outlook* may not in the very next issue dedicate that respectable journal to the unblushing service of obscenity? Who can say that He, whom the psalmist devoutly describes as without variableness or shadow of turning, may not at any time, by reason of larger liberty, take on the levity of a weathercock?

Again, you remark with convincing emphasis, "Omnipotence cannot make men virtuous against their will." But, might I not suggest that it is within the scope of omnipotence, directed by in-

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finite wisdom, and impelled by infinite love, so to marshall the agencies of discipline, education, and persuasion, as to lead men to finally *will* to be virtuous?

“If it were possible for God to hypnotize the race, so that under hypnotic influence every man should choose the crown of glory, I would not have him do it.” Nor would we. But, if it were possible for God so to *rationalize* the race by the insistence of ever unfolding truth and ever mounting ideals, and so to *moralize* it by experience of the inevitable fruits of righteousness and unrighteousness, that it would, at last, freely and rejoicingly choose the crown of glory — would you not have him do it? Conceiving that God *could* do this if he would, believing with you that he *would* if he could, we cannot understand why we should doubt that he *will*.

Following up your happy illustration of the nature of man’s freedom, you exclaim: “God puts the reins of my destiny into my own hands, and neither holds them before nor behind me.” Be it so; you may turn to the right, or to the left, as you will; but *infallibly* to

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learn that the way of the transgressor is hard, while the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And when that lesson is once brought home to you, need there be a doubt regarding the use you will make of "the reins"?

"And the glory of humanity is this, that when at last man is completed, he will stand in his moral nature independent, holding the helm of his own destiny and directing his own course." I feel with you the inspiration of that glowing vision; but I picture that man as one much tried by storm and calm — oft seduced by wanton winds — oft betrayed by treacherous currents — oft bewildered by mirage, and misled by wandering lights; but who now, disillusioned and free, with clear eye and high resolve, sets his prow unswervingly to the pole star of the moral order.

And now, my dear Sir, after these reiterated explanations and protests, may we not hope that, if again you are tempted to associate Universalism with Fatalism, as on another occasion, or with Calvinism as on this, you will have the fairness to explain that it is not Fatalism of the Asiatic type; that

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it is not Predestination of the Calvinistic type; that it is not even Determinism of the scientific type; that it is not, in fact, determinism, or predestination, or fatalism, in any sense that would not be entirely acceptable to the foremost defenders of libertarian doctrine to-day, and that is not entirely compatible with your own "freedom within narrow boundaries." And will you not bear witness for us, that the whole front of our offending is this, we believe

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we may."

I am yours with sincere respect,

W. G. TOUSEY.

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REJOINDERS

[NOTE. — Dr. Abbott's rejoinder to the foregoing letter was printed in *The Outlook* of Dec. 16. This rejoinder will be found cited in full in Professor Tousey's reply, which follows, and which first appeared in *The Universalist Leader* of Dec. 22.]

In *The Outlook* of Dec. 16, Dr. Abbott prints what purports to be a fair presentation of the chief points of my "Open Letter." His brief rejoinder has particular reference to the following passage: "By virtue of his free agency a man may, it is true, plunge from the moral orbit and speed away into darkness and unexplored distance; but, in the 'last analysis,' we shall find that he is so constituted that he cannot be indifferent to his experience — he cannot be unmindful of the receding light, the growing chill, the swiftly gathering perils and portents; and, above all, he cannot escape a gravitation which, searching his elemental life, lays a relentless grip upon his conscience and his reason. It is by warrant of such disclosures of 'the last analysis' that we venture to predict the free reflexion of the wild career and

infallible return to sanity and moral equilibrium."

Dr. Abbott's sole comment is this: —

"In reply we can only say that a free will, which is not free to the very last, seems to us to be not free at all; and it appears to us more reasonable and more reverent to suppose that an omnipotent Being, who can provide that a man who has plunged from his moral orbit may be drawn back again by moral gravitation, should have provided in the first place that no plunge should be made. Any interference with the freedom of choice, either at the beginning or the end of the plunge, would be destructive of virtue, which consists in freely choosing not to make it, or, having made it, not to continue in it."

That a will is not truly free which is not free to the very last — that interference with freedom of choice, either at the beginning or end of the plunge, is destructive of virtue — would go without saying. But the declaration, "It is more reasonable and more reverent to suppose that an omnipotent Being, who can provide that a man who has plunged from the moral orbit may be drawn back by a moral gravitation, should have provided in the first place that no plunge should have been made," is a declaration that cannot be passed so

easily. If, ignoring the usual and well understood meaning of words, we conceive of "*moral gravitation*" after the strict analogy of *physical gravitation*, then the statement is undoubtedly true. But, if by "*moral gravitation*" we are to understand — as in propriety we ought to understand, and as by the express terms of the passage cited we are required to understand — a tendency due, not to compulsion, but to the *persuasiveness* of the *reasonable* and the *right* — then, surely, the proposition is not only glaringly untrue, but singularly at variance with a leading doctrine of the Address — the doctrine that it is more reasonable to suppose that God would give men "liberty within narrow boundaries," than that he would compel them to righteousness. Is it possible, I am forced to ask, that the operation of the forces of moral suasion is, for Dr. Abbott, indistinguishable from positive necessitation? Is it possible that he can think that it is more reasonable and reverent to suppose that an omnipotent Being would chain men to the moral orbit — reduce them from the rank of persons to the destiny of things — when he might be-

stow upon them freedom with its sublime possibilities of character, and yet insure, through agencies operating exclusively by instruction, discipline, and persuasion, the ultimate "free reflexion" of the wildest career? Adopting a word which will have in this connection a peculiar suggestiveness to those who have read the Address, I might ask: Does Dr. Abbott now think that it is more reasonable and reverent to conceive of God as the "Hypnotizer" of the race, than to conceive of him as its Moral Governor? And has he come to believe that it would have been better, by some spell, to have bound the Prodigal to his father's gate, than to have given him his liberty, and permitted him to go to that far country, where disenchantment was inevitable, and where, under inexorable discipline, it was *certain* that he would "come to himself," and resolve to turn back from his wanderings? And has the vision of that chastened and penitent man, taking "the helm of his own destiny, and directing his own course," lost its power to touch the enthusiasm of Dr. Abbott? And does *compulsory rectitude* now awaken deeper transports

than *virtue* achieved through temptation, struggle, and painful self-realization? I commend to Dr. Abbott's attention the quaint but psychologically apt expression of the Parable, "*he came to himself*," and ask: Shall we hold with him that, in that experience, the young man ceased to be free; or, with the great moralists, that then he became for the first time truly free? Shall we hold that it is in the deliberate "reflexion," or in the passionate and reckless "plunge," that we have the truer and more unequivocal expression of free will?

It would seem that Dr. Abbott's rejoinder has narrowed the issue to this: Is moral government — government through the agencies of moral suasion — incompatible with free will? I am persuaded that we might be content to let an issue so simple and, withal, so luminous, stand in its own light, unshadowed by a single comment; but I cannot refrain from two observations: If Dr. Abbott is right in his contention — if moral control is incompatible with freedom, and destructive of virtue — then, when he undertakes to convert sinners by appeals to the reason and the

moral sense, he deliberately assails their freedom; and in striving through moral instrumentalities to make men virtuous, he, so far as successful, makes virtue for them impossible. Again: if Dr. Abbott is right in his contention, it would seem that when God "put into his hands the reins of his own destiny," and out of respect for his freedom refused to "hold them either before or behind," he ought, in the interests of that same freedom, to have gone a step further and paralyzed his cerebrum, lest, learning through the exercise of his intelligence that it is wiser and better in a world "under great divine laws" to keep the moral highway, he should incontinently *will* to keep it, and so willing, abrogate his freedom of will!

But I can imagine that Dr. Abbott may, on reflection, wish to narrow the issue still further; and, while admitting that moral control as ordinarily exercised is not incompatible with liberty, maintain, nevertheless, that it would be incompatible if the persuasives were made overwhelming in force and *certain in effect*. The fallaciousness of this, I cannot doubt, will be apparent enough; but I may be pardoned if I

point out that, under this ruling, Dr. Abbott might, without improperly jeopardizing our free will, continue to press upon us the engaging reasonableness of his agnosticism, provided, only, he were careful not to make it *too* engagingly reasonable — so reasonable, for example, as to *insure our conversion*. He really must remember that this would be an indignity to our humanity, and destructive of our freedom!

W. G. TOUSEY.

CAN GOD BE BAFFLED ?

A Criticism of the Logic of Universalism

THE REV. ERIC WATERHOUSE, M.A., B.D.,
HITHER GREEN, LONDON

I. THE CRITICISM

THERE can be little doubt that the strength of the argument for the ultimate universality of salvation lies in the above question. The Universalist will argue from Scripture, and will plead the instincts of humanity and compassion, but when pressed he will always stand at bay upon the ground that Almighty God cannot be foiled. His mercy and justice should guarantee a final salvation for all men; but even apart from these, his omnipotence must secure it. If it do not, is the taunt, you have no God, merely a demiurge, a workman struggling with refractory material, whose handiwork was so ill-made at the beginning that he forever after employs himself in futile endeavors to set it right once more. Hence, they argue, it is impera-

tive that ultimately, after a long or a short time, for sinner and for saint, the soiling and toiling of this world, whose highest attainments are still spattered with the mud from which it arose, must end in a haven and heaven, a saints' rest and eternal Sabbath day.

But the real crux of the matter is not the harmonizing of God's omnipotence with the eternal existence of sin, but with the existence of sin at all. It is not a question as to whether or not God is going to prove to our satisfaction his omnipotence by finally winding up the universe in a manner we approve. The true difficulty is this — how in his almighty goodness and wisdom he thought fit to allow sin ever to enter into the world.

There has been drawn a picture of a world, here or hereafter, where evil has burnt itself out, like the genteel and highly respectable paradise Spencer prophesies in his "Data of Ethics." Sin, merely a brief episode in the cosmic files of time, is finally put down, and its trumpery revolt against God crushed and squashed forever. Can we help asking the painters of this elysium why, if this be so, this petty drama of life,

this peepshow, this foolish little flutter, this storm in the teacup which we call the world, was ever allowed to break in upon the ageless serenity of eternal rest? Apparently the Absolute One, tired of his absoluteness, unbent a while in play, and let a little world of men exist and run away from his grasp; but then, seeing it was going too far, caught it again, as the cat plays with the mouse. That is not an unfair picture of the guaranteed and fully insured universe where even man, do what he will, must finally, to vindicate God's omnipotence, be saved.

Life is poor stuff if this be all it means. There are some apparently who find it a comfortable thought, but there are others to whom its very mention causes a repulsive nausea. Can the advocates of this view realize what they are doing? They are tearing all the meaning, the reality, the earnestness out of life and offering us a waxwork puppet's existence. It means that whether we swim or sink, face life's rebuffs with a cheer or slink to a suicide's end, live like an angel or live like a devil, in the long run we are all picked up from the silly little stage where we have played the

hero or the coward — what matters it which? — and put back into the box when the play is over. No doubt some kind of purgatory exists between, but what does it really signify? But a little longer or a little shorter time before we are all safely wrapt up in heaven again: nothing more. Is that all life means? We fancy we are free. Is it real liberty or is it but to the end of our string? Is life a real battle or a sham fight where the Red army shall beat the Blue army, and both dine together when it is over? Are the blood and dust and sweat of life just so much effective realism, or are we carving out from its rough and tumble realities and destinies fraught with eternal results? There are many of us who would far rather believe we were living in a real world, at the risk of our own eternal happiness, than accept the vain show of the Universalist's perfectly safe world. We would prefer to fight the battle, even if we lose, than fight where we can neither win nor lose. Better to chance damnation in a real world than to be assured of salvation in one unreal.

The Universalist sometimes contents himself, however, with the assertion of

a chance after death, tacitly assuming that this chance will be enough to bring about the final salvation that he desires for all. With the possibility of such a chance we are not concerned here. Let us grant it for the sake of the argument; let us be generous and grant a thousand chances. But the Universalist position is not guaranteed thereby in the slightest. The man who signs the pledge for the first time is regarded hopefully. He breaks it and signs again: there is less hope this time. A third lapse and a third renewal, and still less hope. It is our universal experience that the man who fails to take the first chance is more likely to fail again than to take the second, and with each successive chance the probability diminishes. Grant these chances after death. Some may take them, but what guaranty have we that all will? If a man is free to choose then as now, it is probable, and must always be possible, that some will refuse and remain unsaved, and the Universalist's hope falls to the ground. If, on the contrary, it be urged that the chances will be so inviting that men cannot refuse them, we are simply led back to the mock world of willy-

nilly salvation from which we had fled in horror.

A further argument is confidently based upon the goodness and mercy of God, which, it is said, would be impugned, as well as his omnipotence, if salvation be not for every one at last. But are we in a position to assert any such thing? An inhabitant of a world where sin, sorrow, and suffering were unknown coming to our world would certainly refuse to believe that these things could be reconciled with the conception of a God all-just, almighty, and all-merciful. But we believe it. Can it be alleged that if God permit man real freedom to decide for himself his eternal destiny and man decides against his highest interests, God is more impugned by this than by these other problems which we have admitted do not nullify his mercy, justice, and love? His ways are not always ours, and his thoughts are not comprehended by our minds; it is sometimes not the last resort of despair, but the truest course of wisdom, to bow our heads and say before him, with Job, "I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

We are brought back again to the

question with which we started. We have seen that we can only accept belief in the ultimate salvation of all men at a certain price — a disastrous price; we must pay for our belief by sacrificing our freedom, and with it the reality of the fight we are engaged in and the issues it involves. Life tastes real; we act and teach and preach, whether we are Universalists or not, as if it were. But the apparent contradiction of Almighty God being baffled in his efforts to save men is so potent to the minds of many that they accept its impossibility as a sufficient reason for the final salvation of all, good and bad alike, and refuse to see that thereby they are committed to a view that empties life of its richest and truest significance.

Yet the root of the whole matter is a mere quibble — we cannot call it more — about the meaning of the word *omnipotence*, and an examination of what is implied in the statement that God is omnipotent may reveal it.

By God's omnipotence is popularly understood the power to do anything and everything. Will it therefore be argued that God can make a circle with

unequal radii, a triangle with its angles greater or less than two right angles, or two and two equal to five? No one but a madman would assert that he could, working by plane geometry and within the laws of our mathematics. There are therefore apparently mathematical impossibilities to omnipotence. Whence, then, the inconsistency of there being also moral impossibilities? The only workable meaning that can be given to omnipotence is not the power to do anything and everything without conditions, but the power to decide without let or hindrance the conditions under which it works. Omnipotence itself, having chosen to work under the conditions of plane geometry, cannot make, under those conditions, a circle of unequal radii, but omnipotence may be able to choose another geometry whose laws are unknown to us. But when God Almighty has chosen his equation and laid it down he himself must work within it or choose another.

Moreover, it is plain that omnipotence can only prove itself omnipotence by doing. The omnipotence that does nothing is a contradiction in terms. Yet it is impossible to do anything with-

out conditions. So that to work under conditions, which is assumed to be a limitation of omnipotence, is necessary before omnipotence can be omnipotence at all. Absolute unconditioned omnipotence would be absolute inability to determine anything. Instead of being the fullest positive it would be the barrenest negative. In fine, absolute omnipotence is neither more nor less than absolute characterlessness; we may as well say absolute nothing. The omnipotence that saveth its life will lose it; the omnipotence that loseth its life will find it. The true omnipotence is the power — a power we but partially possess — wholly to choose its conditions. Once chosen, omnipotence and frailty must both abide by them.

Most men, except hyper-Calvinists and philosophical theorists, believe in the freedom of the will. All men act as if it were true. But human freedom necessarily involves a boundary to God's omnipotence. If God has made man free he himself must respect that freedom and not trespass upon it. Should it be said that such a thing cannot be, are we not there just as much limiting omnipotence in saying that it

cannot create free beings outside of itself? The freedom of the will, in effect, which to many is a *sine qua non* of true morality, can only be established at the cost of sacrificing the absolute conception of omnipotence.

In brief, then, the position of those who reject as unproved the Universalist argument is this: God made man free; in so doing the possibility, but not the actuality, of sin was necessarily allowed. Man by the abuse of his freedom created the actuality. But omnipotent God in creating man free must work within the conditions he himself chose, just as he worked within the conditions of geometrical, mathematical, and other laws. Hence there are moral impossibilities even to omnipotence, just as there are mechanical impossibilities, and it is a moral impossibility for God to save a man against his will. To do so he must lay down fresh conditions and give man no will. The usual Christian teaching tells of chances in this life only. Should we grant innumerable chances hereafter, we only add somewhat to the probability of universal salvation, but do not make it and cannot make it a certainty.

We face, therefore, the possibility, if not the fact, of eternal sin and rebellion. But this possibility does not disturb us more than actual sin; both are necessary consequences of God's original act of making free human beings, and are no more a limitation of his power than that act was. Why God should choose to create man free is, of course, another question, and one that must be confessed quite insoluble for us. The point of our protest is that this is the real question, not the possible eternal consequences of it. Whatever limitation of God's omnipotence there was, if it is to be called a limitation, occurred then. It is an arrant begging of the question to fix upon the later possibility of eternal rebellion against God. But if our argument be sound this creation of free manhood violates only the technical sense of the term omnipotence, and that technical sense has been shown to be an unworkable and therefore, we submit, valueless conception. A self-limitation of omnipotence willingly imposed is not in any valid sense a limitation that detracts from the worth of the conception of omnipotence.

We are now in a position to return to

our question, "Can God be baffled?" We are not going to attempt to answer it dogmatically. We have protested against the assumption that it must be answered in the negative, but we cannot commit ourselves to a confident affirmative. To insist that sin must continue in the impenitent soul forever involves other and graver issues outside our scope: we do not know enough to dogmatize in so confident a manner. All that this paper claims to attempt is a rebuttal of the assertion that the possibility of eternal sin is inconsistent with the Almightyness of God, and the assertion that such possibility — we do not say actuality — must be faced, and can be faced and held, at the sacrifice, not of God's omnipotence, but of a useless and misleading conception of it. We have denied that God, who foresaw and allowed the possibility of sin entering the world, must be insulted and baffled by the possibility of its remaining — a consequence he must have allowed for and thought it right to involve when he made man free. Our customary theology has recognized this and asserts it. It does not attempt, we think wisely, to explain why it was per-

mitted, and seldom does it endeavor to reconcile it with God's omnipotence. But if our argument be sound, there is no need why theology should do so.

Such a position does not imply a callous consent to the eternal loss of human souls. Our heart's desire for Israel, all the Israel of God, is that they may be saved. Our quarrel is with the terms at which the Universalist and Pantheist wish to purchase universal blessedness. To do so they would have us believe in a tame world: we prefer the wild and free. The very chance and hazard they would eliminate is for us the meaning of life. They want a life polished off and rounded up: we prefer the ragged edge and unhewn stone. If in so doing we allow the risk for others, at least we take it ourselves also. Our own souls must stand their chance, and we all contend they should. The Universalist wishes to be sure that our souls shall soar infallibly through the clouds to Heaven. So do we, but we would rather run the risk of total loss than believe we rise upward in a captive balloon. We would rather chance defeat than believe that God has fooled us, that our struggles here are

no real fight at all, and God mocks at our puny victories. A hope like this is more precious to us than consistency with metaphysical conceptions of the Absolute, for it makes life real. We are here to work the works of Him that sent us while it is day, and somehow we understand not the precise way, but it is a sure instinct of our hearts, according as we are faithful or unfaithful in our little, according as we succeed or fail, that Almighty God in his Heaven, who has put a real sword into our hands and given us a place in his ranks to fight his battle, succeeds or fails with us.

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REPLY

BY PROFESSOR TOUSEY

The editors of this *Review*, indisposed, as they explain, to print a paper like the foregoing without giving the other side a hearing, have submitted it to me for comment. I wish that the task could have fallen to more competent hands; but the courteous terms and catholic motive of the request leave me no alternative but prompt and unquestioning acquiescence. Though it must transpire that Dr. Waterhouse and I differ on what both would regard important particulars, I have the pleasant feeling that we might find ourselves in entire accord on most of the great questions of religion and philosophy; and I may as well confess that it would be more agreeable to me to bask in our agreements than to buffet amid our differences. Let it be premised that I am to undertake no defense, nor even exposition of Universalism, further than is made necessary by the criticism I am called to face. The limited space

allotted me must be my excuse, if the review should seem too summary.

I can imagine that many who have had their conception of life enlarged, clarified, and gloriously illumined by the Universalist outlook, and have found strength and inspiration in its blessed assurances, will think that I ought to repudiate the critic's "not unfair picture of the Universalist's perfectly safe world," and that I ought to protest against the use of such verbal pigments as "peepshow"; "waxwork puppet's existence, the very mention of which causes repulsive nausea"; "trump-ery revolt against God"; "sham fight, where the Red army beats the Blue army and both dine together when it is over"; "silly little stage from which we are picked up and put back into the box when the play is over"; "mock world of willy-nilly salvation from which we had fled in horror"; "where God befools us," and "mocks at our puny victories," etc. I am disposed, however, to refer such language to a self-intoxicated and therefore irresponsible rhetoric. To take it seriously would call for comment more caustic than I like to indulge in.

But there appears in this connection a misconception so radical that it would be inexcusable to pass it by without a word. We are told that "many of us would rather risk our eternal happiness than accept the Universalist's perfectly safe world. We would prefer to fight the battle even if we lose, than to fight where we can neither win nor lose"; the imputation being that, fighting in "the Universalist's perfectly safe world," there can be neither victory nor defeat. I greatly fear that our critic much overrates the security of that "perfectly safe world"; and I must warn him that, if Universalism be true, he may not think to find respite from fighting either in skulking or in defeat, — *it will be his doom to fight till he wins*, though the tally of his defeats should stretch in tragic length across the waste of centuries unnumbered.

What, then, is the "logic" to which this criticism is so vigorously addressed? We are told that "the Universalist sometimes contents himself with the assertion of a chance after death, tacitly assuming that this chance will be enough"; sometimes he "confidently bases a further argument upon the

goodness and mercy of God"; and sometimes rests his contention upon "the omnipotence of God apart from his goodness and mercy." Our critic assails each of these arguments in turn, incidentally giving liberal space to an account of the way Universalism strips life of all meaning, reality, and zest. But in the end, to our serious bewilderment, we are expressly assured that "all this paper claims to attempt is the rebuttal of the assertion of the possibility of eternal sin as inconsistent with the almightiness of God." Steadying our minds against this initial vertigo, let us follow the critic in a docile, and not too captious spirit.

Combating the argument said to be based upon a chance after death, Dr. Waterhouse, though non-committal respecting the possibility of such a chance, is liberal enough to grant for the occasion a "thousand chances." While gratefully acknowledging a concession so unusual, I hope it may not seem ungracious if I say that we are looking for even greater liberality at the hands of Infinite Mercy. We are looking, not merely for a thousand chances, but for a thousand times a thousand, — in fact

we conceive that the gate will forever stand ajar to the truly penitent. But this, we are told, "does not guarantee the Universalist's position in the least; for it is our universal experience that the man who fails to take the first chance is more likely to fail again than to take the second chance, and with each successive chance-the probability diminishes." But, a little farther on, we meet the declaration that, "should we grant innumerable chances hereafter, we only add to the probability of universal salvation, but do not make it certain." That is to say, successive chances after death "diminish the probability" of universal salvation, and, at the same time, "add" to that probability, though not to the degree of certainty! Merely reminding our critic that, in the logical arena, it has long been counted dangerous equestrianism to ride two propositions going in opposite directions, it will be but considerate to allow him time comfortably to adjust himself to one saddle or the other, as he may elect. Meanwhile, with no disposition to aggravate the situation, I must, nevertheless, remark in passing, that no Universalist ascribes

to a chance after death any positive efficacy of its own; or, "assumes that such a chance will be enough to bring about the final salvation he desires." Such a chance, he conceives, merely affords further time and opportunity for the truly regenerative agencies of the divine government to work their slow but certain work. We believe with Bishop Butler that, as there is an innate tendency and force in reason to triumph over unreason, so in the moral world there is an innate tendency and force in righteousness to triumph over unrighteousness, which needs only time and a fair field to realize itself. Recognizing that this mortal life is too brief for the consummation of the vast scheme and complex processes of spiritual evolution, and that the hindrances (to use Butler's apt expression) to the forces which make for righteousness are too formidable for the immediate salvation of the more incorrigible, we naturally take a profound interest in the question of a chance after death; but it can scarcely be said, that we "content ourselves with the assertion of such a chance, tacitly assuming that such a chance will be enough."

"If," persists the critic, "it be urged that the chances will be so inviting that men cannot refuse them, we are simply led back to the mock world of willy-nilly salvation from which we had fled in horror." I may as well confess that I am at some loss how to approach a mind that can see no difference between compulsory, "willy-nilly" salvation, and salvation brought about by the lessening of experience, the appeals of love, and the tireless solicitations of the true, the beautiful, and the good. But I should be unfaithful to my opportunity, if in the light of his rulings I did not admonish our brother, that, in his zealous labors to save sinners, he should resort with extreme caution to the Beatitudes of Jesus; and be scrupulously careful not to make the ways of holiness appear "too inviting," lest we all should resolve to walk therein, and so be "led back to that mock world of 'willy-nilly' salvation from which we had fled in horror!"

Our critic goes on to say, and very truly, that "the Universalist confidently bases a further argument on the goodness and mercy of God which would be impugned if salvation be not for every

one at last." In rebuttal he submits, that sin, sorrow, and suffering are now in the world; nevertheless, we believe in the goodness and mercy of God; therefore, we are estopped from holding that eternal sin, sorrow, and suffering impugn His goodness and mercy. It would certainly disconcert me greatly, if in the "logic of Universalism" there could be found reasoning comparable to that, or any admission that "the possibility of eternal sin and rebellion does not disturb us more than actual sin"; and I must lament that our esteemed critic did not take counsel of Job earlier in the paragraph, and "lay his hand on his mouth" before it made articulate his inability to see that the admission of the possibility of moral evil ("the *sine qua non* of true morality"), suitably hedged about, made serviceable to the upbuilding of character, and essential to the realization of a kingdom of righteousness, is less dark, sinister, and compromising than the opening up to fallible feet a broad way leading to eternal apostasy and a pit of infernal, irremediable, and fruitless woe.

At last we are brought to the argu-

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ment upon which, it is alleged, "the Universalist, when pressed, always stands at bay" — the argument whose rebuttal is assigned as "the sole aim" of the paper we are reviewing. This argument is conceived to run as follows when reduced to lowest terms: God in his infinite goodness and mercy would have all men to be saved; being omnipotent, he cannot be baffled; therefore, the salvation of all is assured. The whole strength of this argument, the critic tells us, "rests on a quibble — I cannot call it more — about the word omnipotence." True omnipotence, he insists, is not the power to do anything and everything, but the power to decide the conditions under which it works. The technical, metaphysical conception of omnipotence as absolute is unworkable and absurd. "Absolute omnipotence is absolute nothing." God, for reasons we cannot fathom, made man free, and in doing so set bounds to his own omnipotence; thenceforth it became a moral impossibility to save a man against his will. In fact, there are moral impossibilities even to omnipotence, just as there are mathematical impossibilities.

That our critic may, once for all, be dispossessed of the very misleading idea that the Universalist's contention is based "on a quibble about the word omnipotence," and that it may be seen how wide of the target his "sole aim" is, I hasten to say, that I regard his exposition of omnipotence, in the main, as just and admirable, and to assure him that Universalists have long been accustomed to construe that attribute essentially after the manner he enjoins. It is a fundamental belief with us that God made man free, and, so far, of course, accepted certain limitations to the exercise of his omnipotence. We are quite willing to concede that omnipotence cannot "save a man against his will" — not, however, because of the inviolableness of the human will merely, but because of the very nature of salvation. The initial element and very essence of salvation, as we conceive of it, is the will to be saved. From this standpoint, to say that no man can be saved against his will is about as luminous as to say no man can will what is against his will — no man wills to forsake sin whose will is to follow sin.

But waiving this, it will be more to the point of the present issue frankly to concede for the occasion, that omnipotence can save no man against his will. Nevertheless, we submit, that it is easily within the scope of omnipotence directed by infinite wisdom and impelled by infinite love, so to order things that at last every man shall, of his own desire, will to be saved — and this, be it noted, without resort to compulsion in any form, but in calm reliance upon the ultimately infallible agencies of education, discipline, and persuasion.

Do we admit, then, that God can be baffled? Assuredly, if by this is meant: can man, within the range of the liberty that is his, ignore the admonitions and disregard the commands of his Maker? But, if the meaning is: can the ultimate designs of the Creator, and the supreme purpose of the moral order, be made to miscarry, and finally result in defeat? — this, it is to be confessed, we cannot believe; not, however, because it would impugn the omnipotence of God, but because it would impeach his intelligence, his justice, and his mercy, to whose service all the

resources of his power are forever dedicated. We concede that God can be temporarily "baffled"—if the unhappy word must be used; and our reproach is reduced to this, we cannot think that he will be ultimately foiled as respects his supreme desire and deliberate purpose in creating moral beings.

Down deep, and underlying the whole contention of Dr. Waterhouse, will be found, I am led to think, an assumption which will scarcely bear the light of explicit statement, — an assumption of the absolute, unconditioned freedom of the will. This, I suspect, is the real premise of his inference that God can be baffled, and that human destiny must forever remain uncertain. To me it is a curious poise of mind that can, on the one hand, withhold absolute freedom of action from the Creator; and, on the other, so arrogantly claim it for the creature, — when the experience of every hour affords demonstration that our freedom is limited on every side, and conditioned so variously that it should not surprise us that scientific determinism makes such easy, though deplorable, headway. I must think it anomalous, at least, that man may

baffle the righteous will of the Almighty, but the Almighty may not finally divert the hell-bent will of man. If the conception of the absolute omnipotence of God is unworkable and absurd, I submit that the conception of the absolute, unconditioned freedom of man is even more so.

It will now scarcely be necessary to remark that it is distinctive of the Universalist position to hold, on the one hand, that man has been given a real though not unconditioned freedom; and, on the other, that God exercises over his creation a real though self-limited sovereignty. It will be seen that the logic of Universalism rests, not so much on the technical omnipotence of God, as upon — may I say it — his *common sense*. We conceive that it would not be at all the part of common sense for the Creator so far to abdicate the throne of his kingdom that undisciplined subjects might bring on a reign of interminable anarchy and finally defeat his most cherished designs. Nevertheless, I must reiterate our belief in real freedom. We believe that the Commander of the great schoolship has given to us, so to speak, the

“freedom of the deck” — a freedom large enough for the purposes of discipline and the evolution of the virtues; but we cannot think that he has so far relinquished the helm to childish hands that the ultimate aims of the voyage may miscarry, or any part of the precious freight be finally lost.

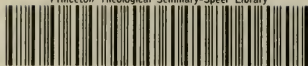
While I cannot but hope to have shown that the logic of Universalism is less vulnerable than our esteemed critic has imagined, I wish it might be mine to forestall any accession to that “repulsive nausea,” from which it seems he suffers when he contemplates a moral system under whose patient and far-reaching discipline every knee must finally bow, and every tongue confess the beauty of holiness. And, when I allow myself to reflect upon his dismay when he shall discover what revolution the Universalist philosophy is working in the religious world to-day, and the resistless character of its progress among thinking men, I am impelled to hurry to his side, and to assure him, that though the Universalist conception should prevail, all is not lost — that in a world where men, through rugged ways, must work out their own salva-

tion, and though cast down and sorely bruised times without number, must struggle on till they win, — he may find stress equal to all his strength, fighting to suit his breeziest moments, hazard enough for his most reckless mood, and tragedy sufficient for all the requirements of his rhetoric. And, though it be what he is pleased to describe as a “fully insured world,” he may suffer loss after loss to the verge of all but irretrievable disaster, and be brought to such abject misery and famishing want, that, like the man in the parable, he will fain fill his belly with the husks of swine. Following up the allusion, I venture to predict that when that prodigal who shall wander longest in “the far country,” at last, under the inexorable schooling of the moral order, shall “come to himself,” and out of that truer self resolves to return to his Father’s house, if in all that painful way those worn but resolute lips should part in speech, it will not be to complain of the tameness of life, nor to jibe at the shallowness of its realities. And at last, when that tragic figure draws near the gate, and He from within comes hurrying

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forth,— He of the infinite compassion — He of the unrelenting love — He of the all-seeing eye and unfathomable fatherhood, — He, I promise, will not “mock at the puny victories” of that scarred, broken, famine-stricken but victorious man; nor essay to pluck him as a “puppet” from a “silly little stage.”

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